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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7306

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0431

RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 1516

RUFPAAA/16AF ASEG AKINCI AB TU IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/COMSIXTHFLT IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/CDR USTRANSCOM SCOTT AFB IL IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE

RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP:ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA//

RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004154

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TASK FORCE ONE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/18/2016

TAGS: AEMR CASC EWWT MARR PINS PREL ETRA KHLS TU

SUBJECT: TFLE01: LEBANON EVACUATION - TURKEY READY TO ASSIST

REF: STATE 117005

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The GOT has offered Turkey as an alternate debarkation point for Lebanon evacuees. Mission believes the port of Mersin and Incirlik AB offer the best facilities. The southeastern Turkish ports of Mersin and Iskenderun can accommodate ferries and medium-sized cruise ships; both are close to the city of Adana, with its U.S. consulate and commercial airport, and to Incirlik AB, which can billet up to 800 evacuees. We also continue to identify Turkish commercial vessels for the evacuation. End Summary

¶2. (C) Ambassador discussed the crisis in Israel and Lebanon with MFA Undersecretary Ali Tuygan on July 17 and with D/US Apakan on July 18 and inquired in general terms about the possibility of Turkish assistance in our evacuation of Amcits from Lebanon, should such assistance become necessary. Both officials indicated a strong willingness to help, understanding that we are not officially asking for assistance at this time. DCM followed up July 18 with MFA Security Affairs DG Hayati Guven, who confirmed that U/S Tuygan has approved the possible use of Mersin and Incirlik AB facilities for Lebanon evacuees and stressed Turkey's readiness to help address all aspects of this crisis.

¶3. (SBU) Mission has provided to the Foreign Ministry, as well as the Transportation Ministry's Maritime Undersecretariat, Military Sealift Command RFP N00033-06-R-5523, amended per our request to allow for delivery of vessels to Turkey as well as Limassol (Turkish flagged vessels are not permitted to enter Republic of Cyprus ports due to the Cyprus dispute). We have urged Turkish officials to disseminate our solicitation widely among eligible shipping firms. We have also directly alerted a wide variety of shipping contacts in Istanbul and Adana. Responses thus far indicate interest on the part of Turkish shippers, plus competition from other countries seeking Turkish vessels to evacuate their nationals from Lebanon.

¶4. (SBU) The ports of Mersin and Iskenderun in southeastern Turkey can accommodate ferries and medium draft cruise ships

at pierside, while larger vessels can be accommodated at anchorages. We are seeking more precise data on port capacities. The port of Mersin has a secure pier as well (8.5 meter draft). Mersin is approximately 57 kilometers from Adana civilian airport and 75 kilometers from Incirlik AB. If necessary, U.S. facilities at Incirlik AB could house and feed approximately eight hundred evacuees for up to 30 days in air-conditioned pre-fab buildings with common showers and restrooms. Incirlik AB could also be used for outbound transport of evacuees, subject to GOT permission. Private buses sufficient to move up to 500 persons from Mersin to Adana or Incirlik can be contracted at short notice.

¶ 15. (SBU) The commercial airport outside Adana has two terminals, a variety of services, and can accommodate some widebodied aircraft (e.g. A300, A340, DC10) for outbound travel of evacuees (runway length 2750 meters). We understand that available hotel rooms are dwindling in Adana but may be available, despite high tourist season demands, in Istanbul and other Turkish ports.

¶ 16. (C) U.S. Consulate Adana has a staff of three Americans plus LES support that can be augmented quickly to provide necessary consular services. RSO is coordinating its own possible augmentation requirements with DS.

¶ 17. (U) Post will maintain contact with the Turkish government and stands ready to support Lebanon evacuation contingencies. Mission Turkey point of contact is DCM Nancy McEldowney, available 24/7 through the embassy operator at 90-312-455-5555, extension 0.

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